

WASHINGTON -- The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law (CAL), favorably reported two bills unanimously today. The subcommittee approved H.R. 5539, the Congressional Review Act Improvement Act, sponsored by subcommittee chairwoman Rep. Linda Sánchez, and H.R. 4044, the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act of 2008, sponsored by Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-IL) and Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA).

The National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act makes it easier for National Guard members and Reservists to obtain bankruptcy relief if they have been on active duty for at least 60 days following September 11, 2001. This protection continues to apply for 18 months after the service member leaves active duty. The Act excuses these members from the burdensome bankruptcy “means test,” which requires debtors to prove their inability to pay their debts.

“If a member of our armed services is forced into bankruptcy because they're fighting a war, the bankruptcy process should at least be fair,” Congresswoman Linda Sánchez said. “Patriotism is about supporting these men and women both while they are on active duty and once they return home, and this bill does that.”

The Congressional Review Act Improvement Act, also reported favorably by the subcommittee, would cut government waste by reducing duplicative paperwork. Under the law, Congress will receive a weekly list of new rules from the Comptroller General, instead of requiring government agencies to submit separate copies of each rule.

“This is a good government and environmentally friendly measure,” Sánchez said. “It saves taxpayers' money and saves our forests.”

Subcommittee approval of the bill comes two days after the celebration of Earth Day.